

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 785

By Finney L

A RESOLUTION to honor Senator Eric Stewart for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that the members of this body should honor those fellow legislators who have performed their duties with the utmost probity, and whose efforts during their time in office have been dedicated to providing thoughtful and exemplary service to their district and to this great State; and

WHEREAS, Senator Eric Stewart is one such distinguished public servant who has served both his constituency and this legislative body with honor and distinction as a Senate member of the 106th and 107th General Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, Eric Stewart has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to the good people of Senate District 14, who evinced their firm belief in Senator Stewart's abilities as a legislator by electing him to serve as their senator, a position in which he has performed admirably; and

WHEREAS, as an active and dynamic participant in the legislative process, Senator Stewart served as a member of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee, the Senate Commerce, Labor, and Agriculture Committee, and the Joint Select Oversight Committee on Corrections; and

WHEREAS, Senator Stewart was born on December 6, 1971, to Richard and Sandra Lester Stewart. Following his early education in the Franklin County School System, he attended Austin Peay State University; and

WHEREAS, even during his formative years, Eric Stewart was recognized as a leader by his peers, and he served in a number of leadership roles, including that of class officer, in elementary, middle, and high school. He was also very active in numerous sports and school events; and

WHEREAS, while growing up, Senator Stewart was a valued member of Oaklawn Baptist Church in Winchester, and could often recite the sermons to his parents after the services; and

WHEREAS, Eric Stewart, the oldest of four children, was an aficionado of early video games and often entertained his mother and younger siblings while in the grocery by juggling apples and oranges to their delight; and

WHEREAS, a thoughtful and conscientious young man, Eric Stewart began working with his father in a sheet metal business at the age of twelve, learning at a young age business lessons that would later inform and impact his role as a business owner; and

WHEREAS, after founding an insurance agency, Senator Stewart, through hard work and an unwavering dedication to excellence, cultivated it into a business of more than one million dollars within three years. His focus and drive have earned him several achievement and incentive awards in the business arena; and

WHEREAS, that same drive and ability to focus on finding a solution to any number of problems served him well during his terms as a member of the Franklin County Commission, and again during his term as State Senator, and will surely ensure his success as a United States Congressman; and

WHEREAS, a firm believer in the importance of community service, Senator Stewart has dedicated his time and energies to a number of civic organizations, including serving as a member of the Franklin County Democratic Party Executive Committee, the Fayetteville/Lincoln County Rotarians, the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, and the Masons, and a founding member of the Franklin County Drug Court Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, known by all as a talented, competitive, and passionate individual, Eric Stewart is a natural problem-solver and a tireless advocate for the causes and issues in which he believes, even when those issues or his positions on them fall outside of mainstream, conventional opinion; and

WHEREAS, Senator Stewart is recognized throughout the great State of Tennessee as a dedicated and well-informed legislator who always votes his conscience with the interest of the good people of Senate District 14 in his heart; and

WHEREAS, throughout his illustrious career as a public servant, Eric Stewart has worked tirelessly on behalf of his constituents, bringing to his office an honorable bearing and the traditional values of hard work and common sense; and

WHEREAS, Senator Eric Stewart has been an advocate for the working men and women of Tennessee. He has supported the State's farmers and its agricultural community, promoting the "Pick Tennessee Products/Tennessee Fresh" program and pushed for call centers to be located within the State. He also called for providing businesses with tax credits for employing workers currently without employment; and

WHEREAS, a champion for our military veterans and public school teachers, Senator Stewart supported benefits for members of the National Guard and providing veterans with voter identification, and opposed larger classroom sizes and measures that would remove the teacher's voice from the direction of education in the State. He has fought to keep public school systems strong and to extend the lottery scholarship to the disabled; and

WHEREAS, Eric Stewart is tough on crime and a conscientious protector of the victims of crime, and he introduced the first bill outlawing bath salts and synthetic drugs. He is a vigorous supporter of the fight against the production, sale, and use of methamphetamine in Tennessee and the maintenance of public registries for violent juvenile sex offenders and for those convicted of gang activity. He also supported the increase in the penalty for kidnapping with imprisonment cases and introduced a bill that made it a crime to harbor runaways; and

WHEREAS, Senator Stewart, during his time at the Capitol, fought to protect Tennessee's majestic beauty by sponsoring the Tennessee Scenic Vistas Protection Act, which seeks to protect our beautiful mountains from destruction. He also sponsored legislation requiring infant screening for debilitating diseases and worked in a bipartisan manner to pass a bill providing parity in the cost of cancer treatments; and

WHEREAS, his many civic and professional accomplishments aside, Eric Stewart is most appreciative of the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Judy, and their two children, Ashley and Holt; and

WHEREAS, Senator Stewart is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized for his distinguished tenure in this body; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor Senator Eric Stewart for his meritorious service to Tennessee as a member of the General Assembly, commend him for his countless contributions and many good works in service of the citizens of the 14th Senatorial District, and extend to him our best wishes for much success and happiness in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.